

Poor Ranking of Universities in Nigeria: Causes, Implications and Way Forward

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Abstract: The paper analyzed the factors responsible for poor ranking of universities in Nigeria. The paper also discussed the implications of the poorly ranked Nigerian universities and suggested measures to address the problems with view of improving the ranking performance in the nearly future. Primary and secondary data were used for the paper. The data were collected from online publications and print materials. The paper concludes that factors responsible for the poor ranking of universities in Nigeria includes; inadequate funding, poor data management, poor website design, inadequate staff, shortage of facilities, unstable academic calendar, political influence, bad leadership, indigenization of principal officers of tertiary institutions, non-defined internationalization Policies, poor reputation, low academic staff-to-student ratio, low doctorates-awarded-to-bachelor-degrees-awarded ratio, low doctorates-awarded-to-academic-staff ratio, low institutional income per staff, research reputation, low research income per staff low research productivity, poor citations (research influence), low proportion of international students, low proportion of international staff, low international collaboration and low industry income (knowledge transfer). Also, the paper identified bad international image, low attraction by International Students and low attraction by international academic staff are the implications of poorly ranked universities. To improve the universities ranking in Nigeria, the paper hereby recommended that the National Universities Commission should formulate national strategic plans and target on national ranking for Nigerian universities and asks universities to develop their strategic plan and set their target on ranking within a time frame; effective web policy and web development, effective data management, adequate funding, employment of adequate academic staff, provision of adequate infrastructure facilities, branding of Nigerian universities, capacity building for universities administrators, expansion of post-graduate schools in the universities to increase enrolment, effective research policy and programme, increment in the number of international student, number of international academic staff, embrace international collaboration of academic staff and internationalization of tertiary education in Nigeria.

Keywords: Ranking, Public Universities, Time Higher Education

Introduction

World University Rankings, 2022 by the Times Higher Education, the largest and most diverse university ranking worldwide, as it cuts across 99 countries and territories, covering more than 1,600 universities. The released of the 2023 shows that many of institutions in Nigeria are ranked

high among the best 500, 1000, and 1500 institutions in the world. University of Ibadan (UI) and University of Lagos (UNILAG) are tied for first spot, both scaling into the top 500 as they were placed in the 401-500 band. Covenant University occupies the third spot and is placed in the group band of 601-800. Two federal universities, Bayero University, Kano (BUK) and Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA) were placed in the group band of 1001-1200. Ranked among the group band of 1201-1500 are four universities, namely universities of Benin, Ilorin, Nsukka and Obafemi Awolowo University. The remaining three universities ranked in the last category of 1501+ include Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta (FUNAAB), Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH) and Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU) Awka. (Rabiu, 2022). Nigeria has doubled the number of its ranked universities – from six to 12 in the recently released Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings.

The rankings for Nigeria in 2021 indicates that only six universities in Nigeria were ranked and they includes University of Ibadan, the Lagos State University, the University of Lagos, the Covenant University, the University of Nigeria and the Obafemi Awolowo University are the Nigerian best global universities within 401-500 Band, 501-600 Band, 601-800 Band, 801-1000 Band and 1001+ Band respectively. Since these Universities are between 401 and 1001+ Band.

There are many ranking institutions across the world, some of them are; the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), The Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings and QS World University Rankings are the prominent rankings in the last few years, based on their consistent evaluation of Universities across the world using informative and performative approaches. The methodologies of ranking being used by these organisations differs. For the purpose of the paper, the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings was adopted.

The performance of Nigerian universities both private and public in the global ranking is not good enough considering her as the giant of Africa and her population Ogunode et al (2022). For instance, the national universities commission has about 220 licensed public and private universities in Nigeria and only twelve was captured in the recent 2023 Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings. Isaac & Imade, (2020) notes that the low performance of Nigerian higher institutions in webometrics ranking is because of certain Institutional and individual factors that are left unattended to. These factors tend to build up overtime until they become almost unbearable. It is important to analyze these factors, their implications and advance measures to provide lasting solution that will ensure sustainable performance of the Nigerian university system.

Purpose of this Paper

The purpose of this paper is to identify the factors responsible for poor ranking of Nigerian universities in the 2023 Time Higher Education ranking with the aims of suggesting measures to improve the ranking in future ranking in subsequent rankings. The specific objectives are:

1. To identify the factors responsible for poor ranking of Nigerian universities;
2. To assess the implications of poor ranking of Nigerian universities;
3. To reveal the methodology employed by Time Higher Education;
4. To suggest measures to adopt for the improvement of Nigerian universities for future exercise.

Methodology

This paper focus on discussed factors responsible for poor ranking of universities in Nigeria. The paper also discussed the implications of the poorly ranked Nigerian universities in Nigeria. The study used secondary data. Content analysis method was adopted for the selection of data. The data were collected from the following sources review of published articles from reputable

international journals such as CEON, Elsevier, Hindawi, JSTOR, IEEE, Learn Techlib SAGE, Nebraska and Springer amongst others.

Conceptual Framework

Concept of Public Universities

Ogunode (2020), public Universities are Universities owned by the government. Public Universities are Universities established to provide post-secondary schools education for Nigerians. Public Universities are Universities established by act of parliament to serve the interest of the general public. Public Universities deal with the provision of teaching, research and community services. The objectives of the Universities in Nigeria Higher education according to FGN, (2014), include: the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and societies; the development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate environment; the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community; the acquisition of an overview of the local and external environments. Ogunode (2020) submits that public Universities in Nigeria are grouped into Federal and State owned Universities. The Federal Universities are owned by the Federal Government of Nigeria while the state Universities are owned by the State Government. Presently, the total number of Federal Universities in Nigeria is 49 While the States owned Universities are 57 (NUC, 2022).

Concept of Universities Ranking

This is the used of accepted indicators to position universities according to their performance indicator supply for the measurement. Institutions Ranking is the systematically arranging or position educational institutions according to their position using an acceptable indicators. Institutional ranking is a system designed to annually position institutions using an accepted measurement judging from the data provided by respective institutions. The various indicator employ in the ranking includes research, teaching, employability and “internationalization. Rankings can take into account research quality and revenue, surveys of academics and employers, staff-student ratios, and statistics on demographics such as the number of international students.

Importance of Universities Ranking

There are many benefits of ranking universities globally. Some of the benefits include;

Ranking helps to Brand Universities

Rankings have been proven to significantly help maintain and build institutional position and reputation. Having your institution rank as highly as possible only improves the chances of falling into a prospective student’s shortlisting process. According to the QS Enrollment Solutions International Student Survey from 2017 just under a quarter (23.5%) of prospective students who took part said that institutional ranking was the most important factor in their choice of university. To rank above a competitor in this context – and having the stronger ‘brand image’ would be advantageous in terms of student recruitment.

Ranking helps to Improve Organization and Management of Universities

Over the years, policymakers at universities and business schools have utilized rankings as a benchmark to work off in order to achieve institutional progression. Research has suggested that as many as 68% of key stakeholders at universities use rankings as a management tool to bring about strategic and academic change. Examples of this include leveraging rankings to create overall target agreements or within specific faculties, offering more scholarships and staff appointments, or even creating a division to monitor rankings.

Ranking Provide Basis for Important Decisions in University Administration

Rankings can be deemed as reliable sources to help encourage the collection and publication of reliable national data in higher education. The results of global rankings can stimulate national debate and focused analysis of key factors that may determine regional, or institutional successes in rankings.

Ranking Influence Partnerships and Collaborations among Universities

University rankings can influence national and international partnerships and collaborations. This ties in with the positive branding that manifests from rankings, but for institutions with an advantageous rank, it will improve willingness of others to partner with them or support their membership of academic or professional associations (B2B Marking, 2018). In the EAIE Barometer study, 35% of practitioners indicated that improving international reputation or position in rankings is one of the top three reasons for internationalising. Rankings are used by some governments in their higher education policy, by institutions looking for international partners and by prospective students searching for a place to study – due, often, to the lack of other widespread metrics (Sandström, 2016). Ranking of universities are to formulate policy and plans for the development of the universities. Ranking enable tertiary institutions administrators make right decisions. Ranking are used to monitor universities performance and to create partners and competitors for benchmarking purposes. Ranking encourages data collection and effective management in the universities system. Ranking enable international collaboration among universities and academics. Ranking influence students' choice of schooling. Universities with good ranking attract more students. Ranking help to attract international academic because some researchers tend to seek to employment at institutions that are perceived as prestigious in their field and also attract international students.

Criteria for Universities to be included in the Rankings

There are seven key criteria for universities to be included in the Rankings:

1. They are required to publish more than 1,000 relevant publications over the previous 5 years, and more than 150 relevant publications in any single year;
2. They must teach at an undergraduate level, usually indicated by having more than zero undergraduate degrees awarded. Postgraduate-only institutions are therefore not in the ranking;
3. They must not be focused on a single narrow subject area (more than 80% of their publication output is from one subject area);
4. They must have supplied “overall” numbers for the ranking year;
5. They must not have more than two of the critical values (academic staff, international academic staff, research staff, students, international students, undergraduate degrees awarded, doctorates awarded, institutional income, research income, research income from industry and commerce) as null (either marked by the institution as “unavailable” or “withheld”). Null values will cause any metric based on that value to also be null;
6. They must supply numbers for at least one applicable subject. If no applicable subjects have been reported the institution is excluded;
7. They must not be featured in the custom exclusions list. Institutions that have requested not to participate in the ranking or that are not eligible for other institution-specific reasons have been excluded (THE. 2021).

Methodology of Ranking Universities

According to THE (2021), the methodologies employ in ranking universities includes;

Teaching (Learning Environment)

1. Reputation survey

The Academic Reputation Survey (run annually) examines the perceived prestige of institutions in teaching. This metric is the total number of votes obtained from the Elsevier reputation survey from the last two years. Each year is calculated as the number of global teaching votes from respondents of the reputation survey, weighted by subject and country to be representative of the distribution of academics globally. Only non-zero values will be standardised using a logarithmic function, and universities that received no votes are scored a zero for this metric.

2. Academic Staff-to-student ratio

The academic staff-to-student ratio is defined as total full time equivalent (FTE) number of staff employed in an academic post divided by FTE number of students in all years and of all programmes that lead to a degree, certificate, university credit or other qualification. This variable is normalised after calculation.

3. Doctorates-awarded-to-bachelor-degrees-awarded ratio

This metric is generated by dividing the total number of doctorates awarded by the total number of undergraduate degrees awarded. This variable is normalised after calculation.

4. Doctorates-awarded-to-academic-staff ratio

As well as giving a sense of how committed an institution is to nurturing the next generation of academics, a high proportion of postgraduate research students also suggests the provision of teaching at the highest level that is thus attractive to graduates and effective at developing them. This metric is generated by dividing the total subject weighted doctorates, by the total subject weighted number of academic staff. This metric takes into account an institution's unique subject mix, reflecting that the volume of doctoral awards varies by discipline. This variable is normalised after calculation.

5. Institutional Income per Staff

This measure of income indicates an institution's general status and gives a broad sense of the infrastructure and facilities available to students and staff. This metric is generated by dividing the institutional income adjusted to PPP, by the total number of academic staff. This variable is normalised after calculation.

Research (Volume, Income and Reputation)

6. Reputation survey

Academic Reputation Survey (run annually) examines the perceived prestige of institutions in research. This metric is the total number of votes obtained from the Elsevier reputation survey from the last two years. Each year is calculated as the number of global research votes from respondents of the reputation survey, weighted by subject and country to be representative of the distribution of academics globally. Only non-zero values will be standardised using a logarithmic function, and universities that received no votes are scored a zero for this metric.

7. Research Income per Staff

This metric is generated by dividing the total subject weighted research income adjusted for PPP, by the total subject weighted number of academic staff and is normalised after calculation. This is a somewhat controversial indicator because it can be influenced by national policy and economic circumstances. Income is crucial to the development of world-class research, and because much of it is subject to competition and judged by peer review, our experts suggested that it was a valid measure. This indicator takes account of each institution's distinct subject profile, reflecting the fact that research grants in science subjects are often bigger than those awarded for the highest-quality social science, arts and humanities research.

8. Research Productivity

This metric is generated by dividing the total subject weighted number of papers published in the academic journals indexed by Elsevier's Scopus database per scholar, divided by the sum of the

total subject weighted number of FTE research staff and FTE academic staff. This metric is normalised after calculation.

9. Citations (Research Influence)

Our research influence indicator looks at universities' role in spreading new knowledge and ideas. We examine research influence by capturing the average number of times a university's published work is cited by scholars globally. The data is normalised by Elsevier to reflect variations in citation volume between different subject areas. This means that institutions with high levels of research activity in subjects with traditionally high citation counts do not gain an unfair advantage. We have blended equal measures of a country-adjusted and non-country-adjusted raw measure of citations scores.

International outlook (Staff, Students, Research)

10. Proportion of International Students

This metric captures the proportion of international students on campus. International students are those whose nationality differs from the country where the institution is based. The metric is calculated as the total FTE number of international students divided by the total FTE number of students. This variable is normalised after calculation.

11. Proportion of International Staff

This metric captures the proportion of international academic staff on campus. International staff are those whose nationality differs from the country where the institution is based. The metric is calculated as the total FTE number of international academic staff divided by the total FTE number of academic staff. This variable is normalised after calculation.

12 International Collaboration

In the third international indicator, we calculate the proportion of an institution's total research journal publications that have at least one international co-author. The metric is generated by dividing the total subject weighted number of publications with at least one international co-author by the total subjected weighted number of publications. This accounts for an institution's subject mix.

13 Industry Income (Knowledge Transfer)

An institution's ability to help industry with innovations, inventions and consultancy has become a core mission of the contemporary global academy. This category suggests the extent to which businesses are willing to pay for research and an institution's ability to attract funding in the commercial marketplace – useful indicators of institutional quality. The indicator seeks to capture such knowledge-transfer activity by looking at how much research income an institution earns from industry (adjusted for PPP), divided by the total number of FTE academic staff it employs. This variable is normalised after calculation.

Factors and Causes Responsible for Poor Ranking of Universities in Nigeria

There are many factors responsible for the poor ranking of universities in Nigeria. Some of the factors include; inadequate funding, poor data management, poor website design, inadequate staff, shortage of facilities, unstable academic calendar, political influence, bad leadership, indigenization of principal officers of tertiary institutions, non-defined internationalization Policies, poor reputation, low academic staff-to-student ratio, low doctorates-awarded-to-bachelor-degrees-awarded ratio, low doctorates-awarded-to-academic-staff ratio, low institutional income per staff, research reputation, low research income per staff low research productivity, poor citations (research influence), low proportion of international students, low proportion of international staff, low international collaboration and low industry income (knowledge transfer).

Inadequate Funding

Inadequate funding of public Universities in Nigeria is a major factor responsible for the poor ranking of the public Universities. This is attested to by Nwankwoala, (2018); Daniel-Kalio, (2019) and Ogunode & Abubakar, (2020) who noted that inadequate funding is one of the major problems facing the administration of public Universities in Nigeria. Ogunode, Yirolkun, & Akeredolu (2019); Obadara, & Alaka, (2013); Nneka, & Ejike, (2018) maintains that the budgetary allocation for the administration of public Universities in Nigeria is not adequate to implement the programme of Universities in Nigeria. Guardian quoted Dr Adenike Oluokun of Adeleke University, Ede, who identified problems confronting university education as poor funding. There is need for adequate funding, quality teaching, research and paper publication in recognised journals, ensuring academic collaboration, employment of international lecturers, admission of international students as well as collaboration with private institutions to boost industry income and developing internationalisation policy on higher education. Guardian quoted Olukoju (2022) who notes that that funding is critical to getting the nation's tertiary institutions to rub shoulders with their counterparts at international levels. "You cannot achieve a world-class academic level without facilities. The parameter indicates that without certain incentives, you cannot get to the top 10. And this translates to funding," he said. He noted that many universities in Nigeria are merely surviving, which makes them pay less attention to the issue of rankings. "Besides, there are not enough teachers. Commitment to teaching and research is low or absent. Excellent and dedicated lecturers are not easy to come by owing to poor remuneration and traumatising working condition characterised by poor and inadequate facilities and frequent industrial actions. For the same reason, bright and young lecturers and administrators are leaving and going abroad. Many universities are not recruiting, even as migrating teachers are not being replaced," Olukoju.

Poor Data Management

The Executive Secretary of National Universities Commission said that for the Nigerian University System (NUS) to be respected globally, it must live above board by managing an effective and reliable information system that would guarantee accurate, reliable and timely data that could be used in advising government on issues of national planning. He observed that without accurate data, effective and strategic planning would not only be difficult for the university but also for the government. He said that as Ivory Towers, Universities were expected to have adequate and reliable information across all variables such as total number of students enrolment; total number of students by programme; faculty; gender; age; mode of entry into the university; Local Government of origin; State of origin; nationality; geo-political zone; distribution in term of PhD, Masters, PGD programmes and students (NUC, 2016). Ogunode (2021) identifies inadequate funding, inadequate working materials, shortage of professional data experts, poor capacity development of data managers and inadequate infrastructural facilities as the problems preventing effective data collection and distribution in the Nigerian higher institutions. To address these problems, Ogunode recommended that the government should increase the funding of higher institutions, more professional data managers should be employed, adequate working tools should be provided, training and retraining programme should be constantly provided for data managers and school administrators should provide all infrastructural facilities needed by units and departments handling data management in the various higher institutions in the country.

Poor Website Design

According to Isaac & Imade, (2020) and Aguillo (2014) there are examples of Universities changing their web domains, but maintaining older ones or even organizations with two or more web domain. These practices not only penalize their web ranks but most importantly decrease the visibility of their contents in the search engines. Many institutions in Nigeria do not have existing web policy and where they exist; little is done to enforce them. Also, the Nigerian Universities Commission (2006) in Isaac & Imade, (2020) pin-pointed the following as factors responsible for Nigerian universities' poor performance in international rankings:

1. Little attention is paid to communicating research findings conducted by scholars in Nigerian universities in a web-searchable form which manifests in publishing in low impact local journals without Internet links; and non-publishing in electronic journals especially open access journals.
- ii. Absence of Nigerian universities on the Internet in a form that can be picked by the radar of webometrics and allied organizations.
- iii. Lack of up-to-date and scanty content of the websites of Nigerian universities.

Inadequate Academic Staff

The shortage of academic staff in the Nigerian universities can be responsible for the poor performance of the universities in the recent time higher education ranking of 2023. THE (2021) submits that we expect an institution to either have at least a proportion of its academic staff in a discipline (4% for Engineering or Social Sciences, 1% for Computer Science, Psychology, Law or Education; 5% for other subjects), or an absolute number of staff threshold. There is a shortage of manpower in Nigerian universities that is why the (National Universities Commission 2021) submits that universities should be isolated from the Federal Government's circular on new employment owing to the shortage of lecturers. The commission noted that 100,000 academic staff members were attending to 2.1 million students in Nigerian universities. The NUC disclosed that the commission was supervising over 200 universities consisting of 48 belonging to the Federal Government; 54 states and 99 private institutions. NUC observed that —The entire system has about 2.1 million students and a staff strength of about 170,000 non-teaching and 100,000 academic staff. —Some of the problems facing the system include increased running costs, meagre budgetary allocations, issues of power shortages and shortages of manpower. Ogunode & Adamu (2021); Akomolafe, & Ibijola, (2014); Alechenu, (2012); Akin-Ibidiran, Ogunode, & Ibidiran (2022); Ogunode & Okwelogu (2022) notes that underfunding, poor manpower planning, poor motivation, government policy on the embargo, corruption (Ghost worker) and strike action problems are the causes of inadequate academic staff in the public universities in North-central Nigeria. The implications of the shortage of academic staff in public universities according to Ogunode (2020) include poor implementation of teaching programme, high student-lecturers ratio, and heavy workload for lecturers, poor local and international ranking, bad international image, poor coverage of scheme of work and poor academic programme accreditation.

Shortage of Facilities

Shortage of infrastructural facilities is another factor that has contributed to the poor ranking of the Nigerian universities. Only few universities in the country can boast adequate facilities according (Ohiare, Ogunode, & Sarafadeen, 2021). Infrastructural facilities according to (Ogunode, 2020) refer to facilities aiding the delivery of academic and non-academic services in educational institutions. Infrastructural facilities include; libraries, laboratories, halls, offices, administrative blocks, hostels, road facilities, water, electricity, internet etc. The availability of infrastructural facilities in adequate quantities will support the effective administration of educational institutions and the inadequacies will prevent effective administration of educational institutions. Many public universities in Nigeria do not have adequate lecture halls, laboratories and offices for both students and academic staff due to poor funding (Akomolafe & Ibijola, 2014; Ogunode, 2020). Ogunode, Josiah & Ajape (2021) submitted that inadequate infrastructural facilities in many public universities in Nigeria have been linked to the high rate of corruption in the system. The money provided for infrastructural facilities is diverted and looted, leaving the universities to suffer a shortage of facilities. Bamiro, (2012); Ebehikhalu & Dawam (2017); Tunde & Issa (2013); Ohiare, Ogunode, & Sarafadeen, (2021) and Ogunode, Josiah & Ajape (2021) submitted that inadequate infrastructural facilities in many public universities in Nigeria have been linked to the high rate of corruption in the system. The money provided for infrastructural facilities is diverted and looted, leaving the universities to suffer a shortage of facilities. Ogunode (2020) and Ogunode, & Jegede (2021) submit that factors responsible for inadequate infrastructural facilities in Nigerian public universities include;

underfunding, increased student population, corruption, poor infrastructural facilities planning, poor supervision and inflation. The implication of inadequate infrastructural facilities in the Nigerian public universities includes and poor quality of education.

Unstable Academic Calendar

Unstable academic calendar in the universities especially the public universities may also have contributed to the low ranking accorded most of the universities that featured in the 2023 ranking of THE. Ogunode, Ugochukwu, & Jegede (2022) states that the strike actions by the different labour unions in the higher institutions in Nigeria have also affected the rating of the various higher institutions especially the universities. Stable academic programme is among the criteria for rating performance of higher institutions. Musa (2015) submitted that one of the *reasons* Nigerian public universities are not performing well in international ranking is the problem of strike actions that always *occur* in the various higher institutions disrupting the academic programme, and hence performance. Guardian (2022) observes for experts in the sector, some of the nation's universities ranked so low because teaching and research are often interrupted by prolonged strikes. This, they noted, has affected the quality of graduates being churned out annually, as they are often times unemployable because of poor training.

Political Influence

Ogunode & Musa (2022a) opines that the low rate of Nigerian public universities can also be linked to the government domination of the universities administrations. The university administration and management in Nigeria are politically influenced and this is causing a lot of problems in the system. The best brain are not appointed to manage the system, necessary resources are not provided and the political will to provide the adequate funding for the development of the universities is lacking in the political officeholders. Pinga, Ivase, & Nomayu, (undated); Yawe, Ivagher and Ijov (2015) submitted that the political interference in higher institutions of learning in Nigeria has degenerated so much that credibility is completely eroded, as principal officers of higher institutions such as vice-chancellors, deputy vice-chancellors, provosts, rectors and registrars among others are appointed on the basis of political affiliations, sectionalism, nepotism, tribalism as well as religious beliefs. The implication of qualification not been the yardstick for the appointment of such principal officers is that any Tom-Dick and Harry can be given such sensitive positions which may make the entire system ineffective and inefficient.

Bad Leadership

Bad leadership can affects the performance of the universities in term of ranking. Ogunode & Musa (2022) submits that none of the Nigerian universities is rated among the best two hundred in the World ranking. This poor performance is due to weak administrators and other challenges. Udida, Bassey, Udofia, & Egbona (2009) concludes that some individuals appointed as vice chancellors of some university are weak, not competent and lack administrative potentials; such appointees must possess administrative qualities and must lead by example. The leader must have integrity, must be knowledgeable, and practice modern types of management leadership styles. He or she must be visionary and ready to adjust to situations in the system. The performance of the administrator should be sustained through the proper utilization of material and human resources in the achievement of the institutional goals and objectives. A lot of higher education system managers do not poses the charisma, or good human relations needed for effective and efficient leadership. As a result of the poor leadership and ineffective style of administration, a lot of programme of activities are not carried out in such institutions such as provision of grant for research and publications, staff welfare is neglected, no adequate control of staff and students, no vision for the university. Such leaders also do not have the zeal for supervision and monitoring of institutional activities. This can affect the system's performance in that, workers can result to a nonchalant attitude toward work and hence no sustainability or continuity of good track records of performance in the system.

Indigenization of Principal Officers of Tertiary Institutions

Domestication of principal officers of the tertiary institution or indigenization of principal officers is a former request by the indigenes of a host community to the government to appoint their sons and daughters into the positions of principal offices of the institutions located in their communities. Domestication of principal officers of the tertiary institution or indigenization of principal officers is an agitation by host communities of tertiary institutions to produce the principal officers of the institutions (Ogunode & Agyo, 2022). Ogunode et al, (2022) submits that indigenization of principal officers of tertiary institutions by political influence often leads the universities to poor performance leading to poor local and international ranking. Majorities of state universities and tertiary institutions are performing poorly because majorities of their principal officers came into offices through political and indigene-ship consideration. Ogunode et al, (2022) observes that there are many implications of indigenizing principal officers of tertiary institutions, especially universities. Some of the implications include; poor international outlook, poor international ranking, bad governance, under-development, discouragement of foreign academics, bad international image and less competition in the universities

Non Defined Internationalization Policies

Ineffective internationalization of higher education policy may have also caused the poor ranking of the Nigerian universities. Ogunode, Ukozor, & Iroegbu (2022) states that Nigeria as a country has not actually come up with a defined internationalization policies or framework that will guide the development of the various higher institutions to attract international academic attention and students and makes the various higher institutions globally competitive. Every year countries like USA, Canada, UK, South-Africa, Russia, India etc come up with policies to attract international students and lecturers into their various higher institutions. These policies and action plans help those countries to internationalize their various higher institutions and make them globally competitive. The lack of these policies specifically on higher education is affecting the internationalization of Nigerian higher education. There are many problems hindering internationalization of Nigerian higher education according Ogunode, et al (2022a) and they include inadequate funding, non-defined internationalization policies, insecurity problem, admission procedures, recruitment policies, poor infrastructural facilities, unstable academic calendar due to industrial/strike actions, academic corruption, unattractive salaries and ineffective administration and management model problems hindering internationalization of Nigerian higher education.

Academic Staff-to-Student Ratio

The poor academic staff-to-student ratio in the majorities of Nigerian universities may be the factors responsible for the poor international ranking of the universities in across the country. Most universities in Nigeria admitted students more than their carry capacity. The National Universities Commission Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) of 2007 stipulated the following teacher/students ratio: 1:20 in science; 1:15 in Engineering and technology; 1:10 in medicine, veterinary medicine and pharmacy, 1:15 in agricultural and environmental sciences and 1:30 in education, management science, social sciences, law and arts (Alechenu, 2012). The Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) on lecturer students' ratio have not been fully implemented in many higher institutions in Nigeria. Lecturers lecture over a hundred students per class in many higher institutions in Nigeria. The FME presented the needs for assessment of Nigerian public universities to the Federal Executive Council in 2012. According to the report, the faculty-to-student ratio is very low in many Nigerian universities. For instance, the National Open University of Nigeria was reported to have a faculty-to-student ratio of 1:363; the University of Abuja, 1:122; and Lagos State University, 1:114 (NEEDS, 2014; Ogunode & Adamu (2021). These high students to lecturer ratio have contributed to the poor ranking of many of the universities in Nigeria.

Doctorates-Awarded-to-Bachelor-Degrees-Awarded Ratio

Many universities in Nigeria has low doctorates-awarded-to-bachelor-degrees-awarded ratio output. This low graduate doctorates-awarded-to-bachelor-degrees-awarded by each universities in Nigeria could be responsible for the low ranking of some of the universities and why many of the universities are not even capture in the ranking band. Musa (2015) and Jude (2018) laments that that the number of PhD students and masters students graduating from the Nigeria universities are few compare to the number of first degree graduates as a result of poor development of post graduate schools. Ola (2016) argues that many public and private universities in Nigeria do not have post-graduate schools and this have affected the production of PhD and master professionals in the country. This problem may have also contributed to the poor performance of the Nigerian universities in the national and international ranking.

Doctorates-Awarded-to-Academic-Staff Ratio

The doctorates-awarded-to-academic-staff ratio in majorities of the Nigerian universities is low and has contributed to the poor performance in the international ranking for years. Adeola (2015); Obi (2018) and Abubakar (2018) concludes that academic staff training in many higher institutions in Nigeria are limited due to poor staff development programme in many higher institutions. Many universities do not have an effective staff development planning. This has affected the development of more academic across the country.

Poor Institutional Income per Staff

The poor institutional income per staff in the Nigerian universities especially the state universities have led to the poor ranking of many Nigerian universities. Iyanda, (2021) observes that in 2021, overall, the individual indicators show that all the six Universities are better in Citations followed by industry income, international outlook than in teaching and research. This is due to the poor funding of the universities in the country. Ogunode et al, (2022) concludes that inadequate funding, weak teaching programme (poor learning environment); research programme (volume, income and reputation); citations (research influence); international outlook (staff, students and research); and industry income (knowledge transfer) are factors responsible for poor ranking of Nigerian public Universities. Based on the identified problems, the following have been suggested: adequate funding, ensuring quality teaching, quality research, quality paper publication in recognized journals, ensuring academic collaboration, employment of international lecturers, admission of international students, collaboration with private institutions to boost industry income and developing internationalization policy on higher education.

Poor Research Income per Staff

The research income per staff in most universities in Nigeria is very low and this may have led to the low ranking of the universities in the Country. The research funds access by academic staff in the Nigerian universities is poor due to the poor budgetary allocation of research programme in many of the universities. Ogunode et al, (2022) laments that research publication of academic staff of Nigeria is low due to poor funding of research programme. Many academic staff sponsors their research and even paid for the publication. A study investigated the sources of research funding available to lecturers in Nigerian Universities, the challenges faced by lecturers in accessing them and possible strategies for improvement by Akpan, Archibong, Undie (n.d.) shows self-funding as major source of research funding in Nigerian Universities, followed by government sector and foreign agencies. Self-funding was also identified as the most potent source of research funding accessed by University lecturers. The study showed that a greater percentage of lecturers, 246 (76.35%), had not benefited from research grants for many years. Inadequate funding of research and stringent conditions attached to research grants were identified as two major constraints to accessing research funds by lecturers.

Low Research Productivity

The general research productivity of Nigerian universities has improved considering the 2023 THE ranking where few Nigerian universities scored high points in term of research publication

while many universities in the Country are underperforming in term of research publication and research influence globally. Ogunode et al, (2022) submits that the research income of public Universities are poor due to the pressing problems in the Universities system. The research income indicator measures the amount of income each Universities gets for their research programme. Yufus (2012) concludes that declining research productivity in the Nigerian university system is attributable to the following constraints among others: Poor and irregular funding, Declining research infrastructure, Poor research motivation, Rising workloads associated with deteriorating staff/student ratio, which leave little time for research, Lack of modern research skills, Inadequate research personnel and Frequent industrial actions. Ogunode, Jegede, Adah, Audu, & Ajape, (2021), lists inadequate research funding, unstable academic calendar/strike actions, inadequate infrastructural facilities, brain-drain, insecurity, corruption, poor technological advancement/poor ICT literacy. Others are poor participation of private sector in research development and lack of conducive working (research) environment as problems facing the administration of research programme. Ogunode, et al (2022) states that generally, public Universities in Nigeria are not doing well in term of teaching and research programmes. For instance, the University of Ibadan that ranked first in the country scored 12.6 % in research, teaching 23.4%, citations 91.2, industry income 35.3 and international outlook 32.2% while the University of Cape Town, which ranked first in South Africa and the continent had 41.4% in research, teaching 31.4% citations 85.5, industry income 56.4% and international outlook 80.1 %.

Poor Citations (Research Influence)

Another area where Nigerian universities are not doing well is in the area of research influence. This low research influence of many of the universities in Nigeria have led to poor ranking. According to THE 2022 ranking, only University of Ibadan and UNN scored 1% on the international outlook rating while others scored zero. Ogunode, et al (2022) observes that poor citation (research influence) influence of public Universities in Nigeria is another major reason for the poor ranking. Citation influence refers to the level of innovation; new discoveries in sciences, social sciences and humanity the Universities are coming up with. The contributions of these findings to the development of knowledge are also important. According to THE (2022), citation influence deals with the level of new knowledge the university is coming out with and the Universities' role in spreading new knowledge and ideas. The indicator measures research influence by capturing the average number of times a university's published work is cited by scholars globally. The citations help to show us how much each university is contributing to the sum of human knowledge: they tell us whose research has stood out, has been picked up and built on by other scholars and, most importantly, has been shared around the global scholarly community to expand the boundaries of our understanding, irrespective of discipline. Ogunode et al, (2022) concluded that the domestication and indigenization of principal officers of the tertiary institutions especially the universities has led to a poor international outlook, localized university system, poor international ranking, bad governances, under-development, and discouragement of foreign academics, bad international image and less competition in the universities.

Low Proportion of International Students

The low proportion of international students in the majorities of Nigerian universities has also contributed to the poor performance in the international ranking. Guardian quoted former vice chancellor of Caleb University, Imota, Prof Ayodeji Olukoju notes that in the 70s and even 80s, foreign lecturers came for sabbaticals in Nigerian universities because the standard met global best practices. "Universities were well funded; the career path of lecturers began by being a first class student. What mattered was what you had upstairs not who you knew, or how politically savvy you were. "The most critical indicator in university ranking is quality and quantity of research. Another strong indicator is the international component of staff and students. Most of our universities have sparse international students or none at all. International staff is also scanty. The poor resourcing of our universities accounts in large part for international students and staff

not coming to study and to teach respectively,” Olukoju added. There are many factors responsible for low international students in Nigeria according to (Ogunode, Yiolokun, & Akeredolu, 019). Ogunode, Aiyedun, & Mcbrown, (2022) discovered that factors responsible for low number of international students in the Nigerian universities include centralized administration system, poor marketing, insecurity problem, unconducive learning environment (inadequate infrastructural facilities, and learning materials), unstable academic calendar, poor development of public universities (leadership problem and autonomy problem) and lack of policies to encourage international students in Nigeria are the reasons for low patronage of Nigerian public universities. The result also revealed that poor ranking, reduction of income and low international outlook are the implication of low patronage of Nigerian public universities by international students. Based on the findings of this study, Aiyedun, & Mcbrown, (2022) recommends among others that Government should increase its total expenditure on education to meet up with the UNESCO specification so as to attract international students all over the world to study in Nigerian universities.

Low Proportion of International Staff

The low number of international academic staff in the Nigerian universities has also resulted to poor ranking of some of the universities. This submission is confirmed by Ogunode Ugochukwu & Iroegbu, (2022) who observes that many higher institutions especially universities cannot boast of having an adequate number of international lecturers in their various universities. Goshwe (2022) points out that some state and federal universities have resorted to employing mainly from their "catchment areas". Based on the law establishing the Federal character commission, no provision or quota is given to international staff. Many factors have attributes to the low number of international academic in the Nigerian universities. Some of the factors according to Ogunode, Olugbenga, & Ezema (2022) include quota system policies, inadequate funding, poor salaries, insecurity, inadequate infrastructural facilities, lack of internationalization policy on higher Education in Nigeria, poor working conditions, unstable academic calendar, poor administration and management model are the factors responsible for the presence of few employed foreign academics in Nigerian higher institutions. Ogunode, et al (2022b) in order to solve this problem recommends that the federal and state government should remove the higher institutions from the federal character employment policy, increase the funding of higher education, increase the salaries of academic staff, provide adequate security and adequate modern infrastructural facilities. Also, the government should come up with internationalization policy on higher education, improve on the working conditions of academic staff and implement all agreement reached with different union groups in the various higher institutions to avoid strike actions.

Poor International Collaboration

The poor international collaboration in term of research by Nigerian academic has also contributed to the poor ranking of universities in Nigeria. Ogunode, Akin-Ibidiran & Ibidiran (2022) argues that many public Universities in Nigeria do not have international students and lecturers and the level by which their academic staff collaborates is poor. The inability of the public University academicians to collaborate with other academics from other Universities, attract international students and lecturers in their Universities are among the factors responsible for the poor ranking.

Low Industry Income (Knowledge Transfer)

Ogunode, Akin-Ibidiran & Ibidiran (2022) observes that the inability of public Universities in Nigeria to generate income from private institutions through the selling of their research output result. Nigerian public Universities are performing low in term of income generation from industries. For instance, According to THE (2022), University of Ibadan which was ranked the best university in Nigeria had an industry income 35.3 in 2022 industry income indicator.

Implication of Poor Ranking on Nigerian Universities

There are many implications of poorly ranked universities. Some of the implications includes; bad international image, low attraction by International Students and low attraction by international academic staff.

Bad International Image

Poor ranking of universities can lead to bad image among the international community. Isaac & Imade (2020) submits that the low webometrics ranking could lead to lowering of the esteem of the staff in the eyes of stakeholders, especially potential students and funding authorities. May be only a handful of parents would whole-heartedly send their children to institutions with low ranks. It is common knowledge that Nigerian universities in the top ten ranking attract the candidates with the highest JAMB scores and with a more sound academic background. Also, academic exchange with reputable universities from other parts of the world for teaching and research may suffer. Collaboration at the institutional level will always be between institutions that share similar reputation. Staff of institutions with poor ranks are most likely to experience low attention and interest from the global labour community. As the scriptures says 'Iron Sharpens Iron'.

Low Attraction by International Students

Poor ranking of universities could discourage people from patronizing the universities. Isaac & Imade, (2020) submits that the poor or low ranking of Nigerian higher institutions by webometrics and other globally acceptable ranking authorities if unchecked would spell doom for Nigerian educational sector and the products of these higher institutions in the global arena. The ranking of higher institutions has a role to play in the way the institutions are viewed in the global academic community. Primarily, webometrics ranking is a measure of the Quality of: Instruction or teaching, Quality of research, Infrastructure and Publication and helps in marketing and PR purposes.

Low Attraction by International Academic Staff

Another negative implication of poor ranking of universities is that it can lead to low attraction of international academic staff. Musa (2019) observes that universities are poor ranked, this affects their image and discourage national and international students and academic to patronize such university.

Way Forward

Based on the following problems identified as factors responsible for poor ranking of Nigerian universities, the following were recommended: that the National Universities Commission should formulate national strategic plans and target on national ranking for Nigerian universities and asks universities to develop their strategic plan and set their target on ranking within a time frame; effective web policy and web development, effective data management, adequate funding, employment of adequate academic staff, provision of adequate infrastructure facilities, branding of Nigerian universities, capacity building for universities administrators, expansion of post-graduate schools in the universities to increase enrolment, effective research policy and programme, increment in the number of international student, number of international academic staff, embrace international collaboration of academic staff and internationalization of tertiary education in Nigeria.

National Target and Universities Target on Ranking

The National Universities Commission should set a target for the Nigerian universities by drawing a workable blueprint on national ranking. All Universities in Nigeria should be directed to develop a road map to improve their ranking in national level and international level. For instance, by year 2030, fifty universities shall be ranked among the best 500 in the THE ranking. 10 in first hundred, 20 in first two hundred, 30 in best three hundred, 40 in best four hundred and 50 in the best five hundred in the Time Higher Education Ranking by 2030. A national committee and individual university committee should be set up by National Universities

Commission. National Universities Commission should train staff of the universities on data management and web management.

Effective Web Policy and Development

According to Nwabueze and Anyira (2011) a good web policy will include the following:

1. A purpose statement, outlining why the policy is being issued.
2. An applicability and scope statement, describing who the policy affects and which actions are permitted by the policy for example
3. An effective date which indicate when the policy came into force.
4. Background information (indicating reasons and history that led to the creation of the policy).
5. Definition of concepts found in the policy document.
6. Life span of the policy (stating timeframe for the review and the conditions to be considered for the review). To improve web visibility, efforts should be made to:
 - i. Increase the activities on the institution's website including the documentation of all staff profiles and issuance of e-mail addresses to all staff.
 - ii. Improve publicity of social and academic activities online.
 - iii. Engage in activities that academically impact the immediate community, the country and the world at large. This will interest and attract people outside the institution thereby increasing the institutions external links (trainings, consultancy, external collaborations etc).

Effective Data Management

The universities administrators in Nigeria should ensure effective data management in the university system. Data on all the activities of the universities should be capture and upload on the universities website. The National universities commission should design a data template for all the universities that capture all the thirteen indicators or four major indicators used by international ranking institutions. This will help to improve the ranking of the universities in Nigeria.

Adequate Funding

To improve the performance of the Nigerian universities in the international ranking, the government should increase the funding of the universities and the universities administrators should increase the internally generated revenue of the universities. Ogunode et al (2022) recommends that Public Universities in Nigeria should be adequately funded by the government. The government should develop the political will to implement the 26% UNESCO recommendation for developing countries. The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) is the commission of the government that handle research programme of the Universities should increase the funding of research for the academic staff. Academic staff should be encouraged to attend international conferences and publish their papers in recognized journals.

Employment of Adequate Academic Staff

There is need to employ more academic staff in all the universities in Nigeria especially the public universities. This will help to reduce the high lecturer-students ratio in the various universities across the country and to help in the improvement of the ranking.

Provision of Adequate Infrastructure Facilities

The government need to invest in the infrastructure of the universities in Nigeria. The development of facilities will help to improve the ranking of the universities in Nigeria.

Branding of Nigerian Universities

The National Universities Commission should come up with branding of Nigerian universities programme through the establishment of department of marketing and direct all universities in Nigeria to explore all available medium to market their universities through social media, advertisement on local and international TV station. *Trends in Higher Education Marketing, Recruitment, and Technology* study shows that university branding requires constant effort and data to support a desired image. A university's position in rankings serves this purpose well. Ranking outcomes are often mentioned on institutional websites, on social media and institutional presentations in order to increase institutional visibility and credibility (Sandström, 2016). Nigerian universities should be encourage to embark on international research problems to find solution. A landmark discoveries on international problem will help promote the name of such universities globally.

Capacity Building

The national universities commission should provide training for academic staff involve in the data management in the universities. Universities administrators and directors of academic planning unit of each universities should be trained on how to improve their ranking performance national and internationally.

Expansion of Post-Graduate Schools in the Universities

To address the problem of low academic staff-to-student ratio, doctorates-awarded-to-bachelor-degrees-awarded ratio and doctorates-awarded-to-academic-staff ratio, Nigerian universities administrators should direct expansion of post graduate schools and come up with policies of admitting a percentage of post graduate every years. Emphasis should be placed on academic staff mentorship within the universities.

Effective Research Policy and Programme

Stakeholders and managers of universities in Nigeria in order to improve the ranking of the universities should address the issues of institutional income per staff, research income per staff and research productivity of the universities by developing an effective research policies and programme and ensure adequate provision of research programme in the universities. Isaac & Imade (2020) recommends the following to improve the research programme in the universities; mandating all academicians to publish a minimum of three articles yearly in highly rated open access journals in their fields. This should have a policy statement backing it up for effective implementation. Registration of all Teaching staff on Google scholar and research gate platforms. Making it compulsory for all staff publications and students projects/thesis/dissertations to be in the institution's open access repository. Encouraging all scholars to place all their publications (pre-prints and post-prints) on their web domains. The cost of scanning and related spending should be the responsibility of the institution. Funding of research activities should be taken very seriously by management of higher institutions. Attaching promotion of staff and other welfare packages to publications in high impact factor open access journals. Uploading every document/information meant for staff or students or the public on the institutions websites. Thus, lecture notes, staff CV's, official bulletins etc. should be made available online. Citations (research influence)

Increase Number of International Students

Another strategy to improve the ranking of the universities in Nigeria is to decentralize admission process in the universities to attract international students. This will help to improve their ranking. Ogunode, et al (2022) suggests that public Universities should come up with policies to attract international students. Admission process in public Universities should be decentralized and make flexible to attract international students. Universities should embark on exchange programme with other international Universities. This will significantly improve university ranking of Nigerian Universities. The number of international students and international staff would both be likely to increase dramatically, boosting performance on the internationalization" indicators of the rankings, while also feeding into your global reputation.

Ogunode, et al (2022a) suggests that the admission procedures for securing admission into Nigerian higher institutions should be internationalized to enable international and domestic students process their admission without stress. Policies on quota and catchment areas should be removed in the admission processes in all

Nigerian higher institutions.

Increase Number of International Staff

In order to improve the ranking of Nigerian universities, there is need for the universities administrators to formulate policy to attract international academic to work in their various universities across the country. Ogunode, et al (2022) recommends that public Universities in Nigeria should employ more international staff. The government should ensure Universities in Nigeria are safe. Salaries and benefits of academic staff are high enough to attract foreign lecturers. Adequate infrastructural facilities are provided in all the public Universities across the country. This will help to improve the ranking of public Universities in Nigeria.recommends that the recruitment processes of securing placement in all higher institutions in Nigeria should be opened and make it international. The federal character principles should be stopped and all best practices should be adopted. Olasosun advised Nigerian universities to improve on factors such as knowledge transfer, digital traffic, international student enrolment, international staff recruitment and research, to improve their positions in the rankings.

Increase International Collaboration of Academic Staff

Nigerian universities academic staff should collaborate with academic staff of other universities to carry out research and public them on a well research indexed journals. This will help to improve their ranking. Ogunode, Akin-Ibidiran & Ibidiran (2022) recommends that collaboration and engagement of Nigerian academic staff with other Universities academic staff will help improve Nigerian university rankings. There is a need to start building a stronger reputation for Nigerian university brand. Collaborating with other institutions and engaging with those working within the industry is a vital way to expose your university to some much-needed international attention. This will help Universities to meet up with scores on ranking weighting that comes with how a university is perceived by its academic reputation, employer reputation or the number of citations of the research it has produced.

Industry Income (Knowledge Transfer)

Nigerian universities should partner with private sector to increase their industrial income. Ogunode (2022) et al suggests that public Universities in Nigeria should identify private organizations within their communities or states and create a link where problems identified by those organization can be researched upon in the Universities and research output that solve such problems are presented to the organizations. This will help to boost the income of the Universities. These can be connections within your university's field of academic research or local businesses and companies in the area. Creating lasting connections with other organizations will help to encourage more academic collaboration, which will in turn help to improve your university's academic reputation. It will also improve your employer reputation. A sa significant indicator in the world university rankings, this will help more of the students to find employment after they graduate.

Internationalization of Tertiary Education in Nigeria

Nigerian universities should be internationalized to have an international outlook. Ogunode (2022a) recommends that the government should direct all regulatory agencies in charge of respective higher institutions to come up with implementable action plans on internationalization of each higher institutions in the country. The federal government should formulate a national policy on internationalization of higher education in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The paper analyzed the factors responsible for poor ranking of universities in Nigeria. The paper also discussed the implications of the poorly ranked Nigerian universities. The paper concludes that factors responsible for the poor ranking of universities in Nigeria includes; inadequate funding, poor data management, poor website design, inadequate staff, shortage of facilities, unstable academic calendar, political influence, bad leadership, indigenization of principal officers of tertiary institutions, non-defined internationalization Policies, poor reputation, low academic staff-to-student ratio, low doctorates-awarded-to-bachelor-degrees-awarded ratio, low doctorates-awarded-to-academic-staff ratio, low institutional income per staff, research reputation, low research income per staff low research productivity, poor citations (research influence), low proportion of international students, low proportion of international staff, low international collaboration and low industry income (knowledge transfer). The paper conclude that bad international image, low attraction by international students and low attraction by international academic staff are the implications of poorly ranked universities. To improve the universities ranking in Nigeria, the paper hereby recommended the following; that the National Universities Commission should formulate national strategic plans and target on national ranking for Nigerian universities and asks universities to develop their strategic plan and set their target on ranking within a time frame; effective web policy and web development, effective data management, adequate funding, employment of adequate academic staff, provision of adequate infrastructure facilities, branding of Nigerian universities, capacity building for universities administrators, expansion of post-graduate schools in the universities to increase enrolment, effective research policy and programme, increment in the number of international student, number of international academic staff, embrace international collaboration of academic staff and internationalization of tertiary education in Nigeria.

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